



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE Rescue boats were moving past the Brown Hotel on Broadway before flood water crested.

Flood water rose rapidly, but went down slowly

improvements of parks, extension of street pavement—were inaugurated to take up some of the slack in employment. In 1933, the distilleries resumed operation, although it was not until April 1, 1936, that legal sale of liquor started again in Kentucky.

The city was beginning to shake itself from the doldrums when the Ohio came boiling out of its banks in January of 1937 in the greatest flood ever recorded, and almost undid the whole recovery program. While Louisville had known floods in the past, all had been minor foot wettings compared to this one.

After days of steady rain, water entered the first floor of many buildings near the river on January 15. Four days later the river reached flood stage along its entire length, and on January 20 Shelbyville Road became the only remaining exit from the city.

Gas and electric power was restricted, schools closed and east-west rail service ended on January 22; the water supply was stopped the next day as the river continued to rise. The city was placed under emergency control, thousands of refugees were evacuated to the Highlands region and to other cities. Boats

patrolled Broadway from one end to the other.

The crest was reached on January 27, and the river began to fall slowly and the cleanup began. It was not until March 15 that schools reopened and the city could get on with its recovery from the depression.

In adding up its losses, Louisville figured that the flood had caused more than \$52,000,000 in property damage alone; 33,000 homes had been destroyed or badly damaged, and 230,000 persons had been driven from their homes. Strangely, not a single life had been lost by drowning, a tribute to the rescue efforts organized in the city's hour of greatest need.

The flood, in retrospect, had one beneficial result. It pointed up the vulnerable position of Louisville and its need for protection. This need resulted eventually in construction of the city's 18½-mile-long floodwall.

During the 1913-1938 period, Louisville had geared itself almost totally to electricity. At the same time it was taking steps to insure a dependable, year-around supply of natural gas with the establishment of the Muldraugh Hill underground storage area. The Louisville Gas and Electric Company also had moved to firm up and expand power supplies.

The falls of the Ohio finally had been harnessed to provide hydroelectric power, the Waterside Power Station had been enlarged, the Beargrass Gas Plant had been built, and substations with the latest in equipment had been spread across the city and county.

In 1934, the company expanded its services across the county line by taking in customers in most of neighboring Meade County.

Meanwhile, rates had continued to show a steady decline. From a charge of 7.336 cents per kilowatt hour in 1925, the rate dropped to 4.231 cents per kilowatt hour for residential users in 1935.

In short, Louisville at last was guaranteed a dependable supply of cheap electricity, the power which would enable the city to serve the nation so well in the critical quarter-century which lay ahead.

For even as this period came to an end, a madman with delusions of conquering the world was loose in Europe, and eventually America would be party to ending the conquests of him and a ruthless ally in the East.

Louisville would play a major role in making this possible.